

ADOPTED VERSION: September 2006

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN  
With Town Council's Requested Revisions – May 4, 2009**

*(bold italics represent changes to current plan)*  
**maps to be added have been distributed under separate cover**

**Goal**

**Promote land use patterns that are consistent with natural resource constraints, are environmentally and economically sound, minimize incompatibility among uses, preserve Tiverton's rural and small town character *and provide for a variety of housing opportunities.***

**Objectives**

- Utilize the land use plan to guide future growth and development, and serve as the basis for future regulatory actions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current zoning district designations, particularly the appropriateness of the areas currently zoned for industrial and highway commercial uses.
- Promote marine related land uses within the non-residential zoning districts along the Tiverton waterfront.
- Support the diversification of the town tax base and increase in net tax revenue through non-residential development, including the development of the town industrial/technology park, in a manner that is compatible with and protects the predominantly rural, historic, maritime and small town character of Tiverton.
- Inventory and evaluate town-owned property to determine the use that promotes the long-term interests of the town.
- Ensure that town staffing is adequate to meet the complex planning and regulatory challenges required as development pressures increase.
- Ensure that utilities are extended and provided only in a manner that is compatible with desired rate and density of future development and done with consideration of aesthetic impacts.
- *Utilizing the visual and analytical tools and capabilities which will be available through the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS), undertake a town-wide parcel inventory and use study to determine where zoning is not reflective of existing conditions, especially in areas that are near build-out. Modify zoning to ensure it is consistent with as-built conditions, particularly in areas where existing water and sewer infrastructure can support higher densities of development.*
- *Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to direct more intense development into areas where the infrastructure can accommodate it (receiving areas) and away from areas where over-development would have negative effects on the rural quality, scenic beauty, and natural environment (sending areas). The zoning in receiving areas (primarily large undeveloped areas of the north part of Town where access to public sewer and water are feasible) should be kept at a level that will allow for increases in density through such a TDR program.*

**Bourne Mill****Page 86**

The Bourne Mill in northern Tiverton, described in Section 6.6 above, is an excellent candidate for a mixed use redevelopment concept. The Bourne Mill complex is located on a 21 acre parcel along the Fall River border in the western part of town, with frontage on Cook Pond (part of Massachusetts). While there are a number of outbuildings to be dismantled, the main structure, built in 1881, is a five-story granite mill building. It is presently used for the storage of personal effects for members of the military, but has no plumbing or heat.

However, the property has connections to public water and sewer. It is accessed by State Avenue (a paved road running along the state border) with potential additional access via an unimproved but platted public street, Mill Street. Positive site qualities include historic architecture, easy access to Route 24, walking proximity to grocery and retail stores, as well as a health care clinic, and reasonable proximity to a public elementary school. Negative site qualities include possible contamination, since the mill was once used for felt production, a high water table, as evidenced through the flooded basement (although not within either the 100 year or 500 year floodplain), and possible structural instability due to neglect.

Conversion of the mill to housing, with a significant portion of the units set aside as affordable, would provide sorely needed rental units in Tiverton, as well as improve the neighborhood by removing a possible environmental hazard, and beautify a landmark parcel located at the gateway to the town. It is estimated that the mill could be rehabilitated and the surrounding area redeveloped to provide a total of 160 units, with **48 of these units affordable**. Figure 6-2 shows a potential redevelopment concept for the Bourne Mill area. While little interest has been shown thus far in redeveloping the Bourne Mill complex, its desirable qualities in conjunction with the demand for apartment units (in both Tiverton and Fall River) will eventually make it attractive for reuse. ***The Town encouraged a true “mixed use” for Bourne Mill by allowing commercial uses that would support and enhance the lifestyle of the people living there, while providing an economic development benefit to the Town.***



**Pocasset Hill Cemetery****Page 106**

Tiverton has one town owned cemetery, which is available to all town residents for burials. The operation and management of this cemetery, Pocasset Hill Cemetery, is the responsibility of the Tiverton Cemetery Commission, whose members are appointed by the Town Council. The Cemetery Commission is also responsible for securing additional land to meet the longer-term burial needs of the town's population.

**7.5 Public Utilities****Water Service**

Although all of south Tiverton and most sparsely populated areas in the north derive their water from wells, most homes and businesses in the more densely settled northeast portion of town are connected to public water. Two water systems serve the town, the Stone Bridge Fire District and the North Tiverton Fire District, both of which were originally established as volunteer fire fighting organizations. A third system, the Tiverton Water Authority, was acquired from the town by the North Tiverton Fire District in November 2002.

The Stone Bridge Fire District, which draws water from Stafford Pond, serves an L-shaped area extending from Stafford Pond west across Bulgarmarsh Road and north along Main Road to Souza Road. It maintains a storage capacity of 1 million gallons per day in two tanks, one with a capacity of 1 million gallons and the second with 0.5 million gallons. It serves approximately 1,070 households. Because the City of Fall River owns the water rights to Stafford Pond, Stone Bridge contracts with the city to purchase and pump water from the pond. The district also has an emergency interconnection with the Town of Portsmouth, which provides Aquidneck Island with emergency water or up to 175,000 gallons per day. Stone Bridge is proposing to either build a new state-of-the art pumping station or completely renovate the existing facility by 2009.

The North Tiverton Fire District also purchases water from the City of Fall River, drawing from North Watuppa Pond, and from the Stone Bridge Fire District for use of Stafford Pond water. Since acquiring the Tiverton Water Authority, North Tiverton Fire District has jurisdiction over the entire town, except for the area served by Stone Bridge. This district presently serves nearly 3,000 households, and would potentially serve new developments east of Stafford Pond and south of Bulgarmarsh Road. Where public water has not been extended, however, the availability of potable water is not known.

Both districts maintain their own distribution system. As required by the Rhode Island Water Resources Board, both districts update their management plans *every five years*. Stafford Pond, and Nonquit Pond in south Tiverton, which is part of the City of Newport's water supply system and could someday provide drinking water to Tiverton residents, are both protected by means of a watershed protection overlay district (see Chapter 5).

As of 2005, the North Tiverton Fire District has completed or is undertaking a number of system improvements, which include: a new emergency pump station on Stafford Road, a 16

Water management plans for each of the two water supply districts, Stone Bridge and North Tiverton, are required by the state, and each has prepared a plan. These plans are required to be consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan. However, a plan addressing water supply for the entire municipality has yet to be developed.

**Policy 10a:** Encourage the Stone Bridge and North Tiverton Fire Districts to present a single, town-wide management plan, and require them to work in conjunction with the Planning Board in determining a measured expansion of public water so as to moderate development pressure in the town.

**Policy 10b:** Consider the merger of the Stone Bridge and North Tiverton Fire Districts into a single water district serving the entire town.

**Policy 10c:** *Develop a town-wide Drought Management Strategy outlining a joint effort between the Town of Tiverton and the North Tiverton and Stone Bridge Fire Districts. Such a plan should be developed in accordance with the State Guide Plan Element 724: Drought Management Plan and should minimize the effects of drought on public health, safety, economic activity and environmental resources.*

## 8.0 CIRCULATION

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This chapter of the Comprehensive Community Plan addresses all modes of transportation including the town roadway system, public transit programs, and existing and proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes within the town. It is essential to provide safe and efficient circulation while maintaining the town's small town and rural qualities and scenic values. Future transportation projects, initiatives and policies are also addressed.

### 8.1 Roadway System

The roadway system classifies a road or street according to the function it serves or is intended to serve. A roadway can serve two separate functions: provide for through traffic and travel mobility, the principal function of expressways and arterials; and provide access to adjacent land, the major function of local or residential streets and to some degree collector routes.

Tiverton uses a system of three highway classifications for rural and urban areas, *consisting of three major street types for rural and urban areas, each with varying geometric design requirements for roadways within new subdivisions.*

**Street Classification.** *A method of roadway organization which identifies a street hierarchy according to function within a road system, that is, types of vehicles served and anticipated volumes, for the purposes of promoting safety, efficient land use and the design character of neighborhoods and districts. Local classifications use the following as major categories:*

**Arterial:** A major street that serves as an avenue for the circulation of traffic onto, out of, or around a municipality and which carries high volumes of traffic.

**Collector:** A street whose principal function is to carry traffic between local streets and arterial streets, but that may also provide direct access to abutting properties.

**Local:** A street whose primary function is to provide access to abutting properties.

Figure 8-1 shows *signalized intersections and functional classification (based on Federal Highway HPMS values) of the roadways in Tiverton.*

### Conflicts and Accident Data

*Due to the increase in housing subdivisions, drive-through windows and other elements of suburban sprawl, many streets in Tiverton have outgrown their functional classification.* A number of areas are especially problematical, including the following:

- \* Main Road from Riverside Drive to Narragansett Avenue
- \* Main Road from Pocasset Hill Cemetery to Russell Drive
- \* Bliss Four Corners at the intersection of Stafford Road and Bulgarmarsh Road
- \* Canning Boulevard from the Fall River border to Stafford Road at Hurst Lane.

Hall with the waterfront at Stone Bridge and follow along scenic roadways including Nanaquaket Road, Seapowet Avenue and Puncateest Neck Road to the border with Little Compton. While this bikeway was not pursued further by the town, many of the roadways remain very suitable for bicycling for both recreation and travel purposes, and are delineated as such on the current version of the state bike map (“A Guide to Cycling in the Ocean State”). The possibility also remains that Tiverton could be part of a larger bicycle network that involves linking the Stone Bridge area with a bike route along the rail corridor described above, which could also eventually link to bikeways in both the East Bay area and Aquidneck Island.

## 85 Circulation Goal and Objectives

### Goal

**Provide for the safe and efficient management of automobile traffic while encouraging alternative forms of circulation that complement the community’s special character and quality of place.**

### Objectives

- Implement design guidelines that assure safe and efficient access and egress to commercial establishments and housing subdivisions.
- Inventory town rights of way and platted, unimproved streets and roads, and determine their legal status.
- Encourage public transportation usage, including RIPTA commuter bus service.
- Encourage the provision of alternative forms of circulation, including bicycle, pedestrian and water transportation.

## 8.6 Circulation Policies

### Roadway System

***Utilizing the functional street classification (Arterial, Collector, Local) the town should develop an access management plan to limit and coordinate curb cuts in order to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety. The intent of such a plan is to manage the way development accesses the local street system, not to govern the type or intensity of development. An access management plan is not a substitute for sound land use decisions and good growth management principles.*** Shared driveways or the development of internal circulation systems should be encouraged. Subdivision and site plan reviews should reflect these policies. Where possible, regional or through traffic should be directed to arterials, not collectors. Traffic signals are inconsistent with the functioning and character of community’s roadways and should be avoided wherever possible, consistent with safety considerations.

In addition, Tiverton’s safe and efficient transportation systems can be maintained and enhanced without sacrificing the community’s attractive appearance. Roadways should be both functional

and aesthetically pleasing to maintain quality of place. Many town roadways continue to reward motorists with scenic landscapes and water views, including numerous reminders of the town's maritime and agricultural history and culture. However, recent commercial and housing development adjacent to major transportation corridors threatens functionality and appearance. Examples of unsightly roadside development include drive-through windows, sprawling commercial parking lots with inadequate landscaping, oversized signage and excessive lighting. Unsightly sprawl also poses a safety hazard by attracting increased traffic volume that burdens existing roadways.

**Policy 1:** *Apply access management tools to site plan review for commercial developments and residential subdivisions to reduce congestion and improve safety. Consider developing form-based codes as a way of providing for more transportation choices, walkable neighborhoods, a wider range of housing opportunities, and unique, attractive, communities with a strong sense of place.*

**Policy 1a:** *Utilizing the Tiverton Police Department Accident Data, monitor areas where accident frequency is high and increasing. Consider design changes or improvements to mitigate accidents and improve safety.*

Drive-through windows contribute to tailpipe air pollution and can present a safety hazard to adjoining roadways. The Conservation Commission's Litter Abatement Committee also reports that the largest single source of roadside litter comes from the town's drive-through windows. These windows pose safety hazards because motorists queue-up on public roads at peak traffic periods. Moreover, drive-through windows detract from the community's rural and scenic quality.

**Policy 2:** *Review all commercial developments for consistency with the goals of creating a more walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment. Reevaluate parking requirements – consider on-street parking, reduced on-site parking standards, and encourage shared parking concepts wherever appropriate. Discourage or limit drive-up service windows.*

Title 45 Section 23.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws empowers communities to prepare and adopt an official map that identifies and shows the location of public streets and proposed streets. The law provides a procedure for the preparation of an official map. Such an official street map can guide the town in allocating the services and resources of the Public Works Department related to road maintenance.

**Policy 3:** Conduct a comprehensive audit to determine legal status of streets in town, and maintain an updated "official street map" in Town Hall. *This map should denote street classifications and include platted, unimproved streets and roads.*

**Policy 3a:** *Consider developing a Pavement Management Plan based on the official street map to establish a prioritization for road repairs and paving schedule. Coordinate plan with Wastewater Management and all utilities for areas scheduled for sewer installations or other utility work.*



This chapter of the Comprehensive Community Plan contains a description of Tiverton's open space and conservation areas, and its recreational facilities, including coastal features. Opportunities for further protection and enhancement of these areas are proposed.

### 9.1 Existing Resources

Rhode Island and the New England region have led the nation in appreciating the value of open space and recreational resources. Since 1985, Rhode Island voters have approved many millions to be spent on the acquisition of open space and the development of recreational facilities, and Tiverton has used state matching funds for both purposes: to acquire Weetamoo Woods and to develop a new soccer field and baseball-softball field at the Town Farm. A proactive Open Space Commission works alongside the Tiverton Land Trust to tap other funding sources to acquire or protect important open space. The Land Trust has already saved 230 acres that were proposed for actual development. Both public and private interests must continue to work together to preserve open space in a carefully thought out strategy that balances open space preservation with other policy goals of the town, such as the need for housing, economic opportunity and active recreation facilities.

In 1989, the Recreation Committee prepared the Tiverton Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan, which is incorporated herein by reference. In the plan, the town accepts responsibility for providing sufficient recreation opportunities for all of its citizens. It places a priority on improving existing facilities and pursuing preservation particularly in the coastal region. The plan assisted in obtaining grants from the RI Department of Environmental Management for the development of the new recreational fields at the Town Farm, as well as purchase of the parcels that make up Weetamoo Woods. With many successful open space acquisitions and recreational developments completed, and given the rapidly changing town demographics, a review of the Tiverton Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan is necessary for planning future needs.

Several groups provide recreation programs, including the Little League and the Boy Scouts. The town employs a Recreation Coordinator to assist the Recreation Commission to expand its year round programs. The coordinator serves as liaison between public agencies and private groups for the utilization of the town's facilities.

Table 9-1 contains a listing of Tiverton's open space, conservation and recreational resources, which are also delineated in corresponding Figure 9-1. ***Figure 9.2 contains a map depicting CRMC designated rights-of-way.*** Most of the open space is in the southern portion of town, with the largest parcels consisting of Pardon Gray Preserve/Weetamoo Woods, Eight Rod Management Area and Seapowet Marsh. Most of the active recreational areas are associated with the schools. The need for open space and recreational resources continues to be greatest in north Tiverton, which has the highest population density but the least amount of available space.

**Policy 2: The Open Space Commission will work with community groups and the Recreation Commission to identify sources of funding for acquiring open space in the more urbanized areas of Tiverton.**

The establishment of the Tiverton Land Trust has greatly increased the potential for acquiring and protecting open space in the town. Private land trusts often have additional opportunities and greater flexibility in financing land protection as compared to public entities. The coordination of the efforts of the town – its officials and volunteer boards and commission, particularly the Open Space Commission – with those of the Tiverton Land Trust and other private land protection entities, will significantly enhance the preservation of open space in Tiverton.

**Policy 3: The town will coordinate closely with the Land Trust and other private organizations to ensure that both public and private monies are spent for the greatest benefit in preserving open space.**

Setting aside private open space is now provided for in the Rural Residential Development regulations of the zoning ordinance; such developments are required for proposed residential subdivisions within the Watershed Protection Overlay District. Management plans are also required for these open space areas. The open space that is set aside as part of a Rural Residential Development should be selected and managed in accordance with the open space protection criteria outlined in Policy 1, and in a manner that optimizes linkages with open space areas in abutting developments. To ensure this, the Planning Board (who approves all such subdivisions) shall coordinate its review of the development with the local commissions who have expertise in open space needs and environmental issues.

**Policy 4: The Planning Board will require input from the Open Space Commission and the Conservation Commission in their review of proposed open space areas of Rural Residential Developments.**

One unfortunate aspect of the conversion of land to housing is the loss of farmland, which affects the town's visual quality, culture and sense of place. The problem is complex, and many factors are outside the control of the town, such as the economic viability of small scale agriculture uses. However, there are existing state programs which give tax relief and offer development rights purchase to owners of agricultural land who agree to retain it for that use. Every effort should be made to promote these programs to local agricultural landowners.

**Policy 5: Protect farmland through active involvement in funding programs that preserve land for agricultural use.**

***Policy 5a: Continue to promote the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program at the local level to ensure eligible landowners are aware of the Program. Continue to utilize State Guide Plan Element 161 – Forest Resources Management Plan in managing and maintaining publicly owned forestland.***

***Policy 5b: Support and encourage existing programs, including tax provisions, purchase of development rights and outright purchase, to conserve the Town's remaining farmland and actively managed forestland.***

Despite the absence of an updated recreation plan, the Tiverton Recreation Commission has established that there is a need for more active playing fields for baseball, soccer and lacrosse. The existing fields are used for more than one sports activity, which involves the greater part of the year. Such dual use leaves little time for the fields to rest and be properly maintained. The Recreation Commission estimates that, at a minimum, an area equivalent to the Town Farm Recreation Area on Main Road is needed to develop additional playing fields.

**Policy 9:        Develop additional playing fields by acquiring and/or improving land to meet the active recreation needs of Tiverton residents.**

Note: The following language and policies 10-12 are taken from the original plan

Nature awareness builds an appreciation of community and the surrounding environment. Tiverton may be able to develop a nature center which tailors exhibits and programs to the local environment, and incorporates examples of the community's ecosystems. The nature center should be linked to the science curriculum of the town's schools.

**Policy 10:      Consider development of a nature awareness program with a public education component that can be utilized as part of the school curriculum.**

School recreational facilities provide an important amenity to the community. Possibilities for expanding public utilization of these facilities should be investigated.

**Policy 11       Examine expanding the utilization of School Department recreational facilities for public use.**

A recreation and open space map available at the libraries and town hall would encourage use of the areas as well as build public support for open space and recreation programs.

**Policy 12:      Publish a town-wide map showing recreational and open space resources, picnic areas, trails, waterfront rights-of-ways and *CRMC designated right of way*.**

Tiverton sports/activities programs are indicative of a common situation in American communities -- not having sufficient opportunity for teens. There are town programs tailored for the youth and early teens by private organizations such as Tiverton Youth Soccer, Schooner's Football, Little League and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. There are also programs for adults and seniors. There are, however, very few for older teens. Though the School Department offers sports, and occasional gatherings for teens, there is a need for a teen center and activity coordinator to offer more programs for teens.

**Policy 13:      Develop a long range plan to provide year round activities for older teens as part of a comprehensive recreation plan for all ages and population groups.**